



Association of International Education Administrators
Leaders in International Higher Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS (AIEA) PRESENTS 2016
INNOVATION IN INTERNATIONALIZATION AWARD TO WESTMINSTER COLLEGE**

At the 2016 Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) Conference, the Innovation Award in Internationalization was awarded to Westminster College for its “Take a Friend Home” initiative. This award, which is in its second year, highlights exceptional programs, projects, or initiatives aimed at advancing internationalization and directed by Senior International Officers (SIOs) on their respective campuses. The categories that can be used for these programs are based on the American Council on Education’s six elements of comprehensive internationalization (Articulated Institutional Commitment; Administrative Structure and Staffing; Curriculum; Faculty Policies and Practices; Student Mobility; Collaboration and Partnerships).

As colleges and universities around the US come to increasingly recognize the value and importance of pursuing internationalization as a distinct and intentional project, the need grows for models regarding various aspects of this work. Many SIOs work tirelessly, with little institutional support, but with passion, vision and commitment to pursue internationalization in ways to best meet institutional needs. Some of this work is not only effective, but outstanding, and worthy of emulation by other SIOs who are either new to the field or value new approaches to the work they do.

AIEA recognizes Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri for the 2016 Innovation Award. A small, liberal arts residential college, Westminster has developed an innovative co-curricular program known as the “Take A Friend Home” initiative which has been active since 2008.

The basic idea is simple, and relatively inexpensive: international and domestic students are paired as teams, and travel to each other’s home cities where they are hosted by their respective families for a period of time. The learning and friendships developed are subsequently formalized in a mandatory “reintegration” course where participating students reflect upon, analyze, and share their experiences.

The Take A Friend Home program connects students who would normally have no ability to travel and learn together. Westminster reports that for a minimal investment of travel and administrative funds the program is replicable elsewhere, and notes that not only has the program helped spur deeply rooted internationalization on campus but has spurred valuable qualitative outcomes that have led students to couple their TAFH experiences with other types of international engagement. A recent student pair from Little Rock and Kathmandu coupled their experience in Nepal with a service project, staying on for an additional two weeks to work on a “Project for Peace” program in a remote region of the country.



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AIEA recognizes Westminster for this project, its relative cost-effectiveness and simplicity, and the way in which the College has built upon this core idea in a manner that is both replicable elsewhere and open to innovative approaches to innovation linking curricular and co-curricular international activities.

Founded in 1982, the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), hosted at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, is a professional membership organization composed of institutional leaders representing over 300 institutions engaged in advancing the international dimensions of higher education.

For additional information, visit www.aieaworld.org or contact AIEA at aiea@duke.edu or 1-919- 668-1928.

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